



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

---

### I.

#### CHARLES DARWIN, THE MAN AND THE SCIENTIST.

WE are not surprised at the publishers' statement that the first edition in this country of "Darwin's Life and Letters"\* was exhausted within a few days after its publication. Thoughtful people, who have marked the influence his writings have exerted in the domain of science within the last quarter of a century, cannot feel otherwise than curious, and even anxious, to know something more of the man himself than could be obtained through his writings—just such information, in fact, as these volumes supply. Mr. Darwin, notwithstanding his absorption in scientific work, was a good correspondent. Indeed, the nature of his life-work was such as to bring him into close correspondence with many people eminent in different departments of science, and these letters, with explanatory comments and many interesting details, personal and relative, are here collected and arranged by his son with pious care, forming, with the autobiographical portion of the book, a valuable and complete sketch and biography. The illustrations are few, and include two portraits, a sketch of the Darwin mansion, and one of the study of the great naturalist. The autobiography was written in 1876 for his children, without any idea of publication, and the editor has omitted some passages of a strictly personal character. This is followed by some reminiscences by members of his family and others, but the letters occupy the greater part of both volumes. The concluding chapters contain a brief account of his last illness and death, and of his public funeral in Westminster Abbey.

There is very little to be said about such a work as this of a critical character. The letters are deeply interesting, as showing the nature and temperament of the man as well as throwing light on many curious scientific questions, and on the circumstances surrounding Mr. Darwin in his life-work. It is seldom, we imagine, that a mere collection of letters reveals so much of biographical detail as these do, and it seems to us that the editor has most wisely and acceptably used them freely in this way. They also form a valuable contribution to scientific literature. They show us a man thoroughly in love with his work, ardent and diligent in the collection and classification of facts, and singularly free from foibles and egotism. The public knew that Charles Darwin was, during the later years of his life, a constant sufferer from bodily ailments which interfered sadly with his plans; but few of us were prepared for the statement that for nearly forty years he never knew one day of the health of ordinary men, but had to maintain a constant struggle against the weariness and strain of sickness. That under these circumstances he accomplished so much as an investigator of facts in the world of nature

\* "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin." Including an Autobiographical Chapter. Edited by his son. 2 vols. D. Appleton & Co.

is a marvel. One is not surprised to learn that he set great store on the minutes, "never wasting a few spare minutes from thinking it not worth while to set to work." Mr. Darwin was a born naturalist, having a habit of collecting and classifying natural objects from his earliest boyhood; but in other respects he writes himself down as a rather ordinary boy, with a penchant for shooting game, in which in early manhood he acquired great skill. He remembered having, as a boy, a keen sense of pleasure in mastering subjects which really interested him. The vocation to which he first turned his thoughts was that of a clergyman, and he pursued a course of study at Cambridge University with that end in view.

His appointment as naturalist to the scientific expedition in the ship "Beagle" on her voyage to South America in 1831, diverted his attention from the Church, and was the great turning point in his career. At this time he was a believer in the orthodox creeds. The history of his declension from the faith of the Church forms a brief but very interesting chapter in this work, and is given from his own letters and diary. It appears that he gave up his belief, slowly and unwillingly, but finally avowed himself an agnostic, though confessing that the idea of annihilation was intolerable to him. He rarely discussed this question, however, feeling that the whole subject was beyond the scope of man's intellect, and that every one must judge for himself between "conflicting vague possibilities." In one respect Darwin was very favorably situated, namely, in being possessed of an ample inherited income, which made it possible for him to pursue his favorite tasks without care about finances. He realized also a good profit from his books, part of which he expended in furthering public objects of a scientific character. Professor Huxley contributes an interesting chapter to the first volume, on Darwin's great book, "The Origin of Species," in which he refers to the complete change of view which has taken place in the scientific world with regard to the theory of evolution, and to the misconceptions regarding it which yet prevail in many quarters.

## II.

### DARWINISM AND ETHICS.

PROFESSOR SCHURMAN, of Cornell University, is the author of an interesting treatise on "Darwinism and Ethics,"\* which discusses the scientific as opposed to the speculative method as applied to ethical problems. The prevalent idea of the book appears to us to be embodied in the following sentence, from the first chapter: "If ethics, instead of groping through the void, impalpable inane of fictitious pre-human morality, would in good earnest describe historic morality in all its fixed and changing characters, tracing the evolution of moral ideas and institutions from their earliest to their present form, then its scientific character, which is to-day a reproach, would be firmly established, and it could claim to be a science as unimpeachable as any other branch of history." And again: "Given the earliest morality of which we have any written record, to trace from it through progressive stages the morality of to-day: that is the problem, and the only problem, which can fall to a truly *scientific* ethics." The author draws a distinction between ethics as a science and a philosophy, and he deplores the unscientific character of the prevailing ethical systems, which he characterizes as speculative. It is just here that Darwinism seems to come in. Darwin, according to our author, is the father of evolutionary ethics, but his work is incomplete; first, because he uses the historical method in morals more as a means of confirming a

\* "The Ethical Import of Darwinism." By Jacob Gould Schurman, Sage Professor of Philosophy in Cornell University. Charles Scribner's Sons.